

Youth Employability and Work Attitudesⁱ

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Abstract:

Youth employability is often hindered by a lack of good work attitude among young people. This article anticipates that the attitude towards work is indicative of the youths' future behavior at work. It is derived from a research project that used the stratified sampling technique on 159 respondents and 10 interviewees from Program Latihan Khidmat Negara (PLKN). The analysis strategy of the research depends on the anomalous cases of the youth attitudes towards the 9-work attitude construct. The results found correlations between age and the 9-work attitude construct. They chose work that offers less workload, less competition, and is less stressful, but offers high income. They were also less creative artwork, uncompromising, indeterminate and complacent. In terms of emotional aspect, the respondents revealed that they were easily annoyed and impatient at work, and were unable to work under pressure. The study anticipates their difficult employability situation in the future.

Keywords:

Malaysian youths; Work attitudes; Youth employability; School-to-work transition; PLKN; Mixed methods

1. Introduction

Youths are an important asset to the workforce. However, various literatures discuss youth unemployment arising from the incompatibility between educational institutions and the labour market (Bessant, 2002; Loughlin & Barling, 2001; Summer, 1992). Youths in Malaysia, in particular, do not have the good work attitude required by the labour market (Baskaran, 2009). Many employers consciously cite work attitudes as a reason young people lose their job, rather than the latter's inability to actually perform their jobs (Nor Hartini, 2007).

Research has been conducted on unemployment issues and problems among university graduates in Malaysia (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia, 2011). However, there are few contemporary studies which examine youths' work attitude and employability situation prior to their entrance into higher learning centers. This article therefore captures youths' attitudes towards work at an early age. Drawing from employers' perception as well as graduates' employability situation, it is found that a lack of work ethics among youths is associated with their socially disapproved attitudes, such as not having the driving force to achieve success, as well as low team spirit and work preparedness. These attitudes, according to the employers, are the major social attitudes necessary for the development of productive young workers.

Among the objectives of the study are to understand the meaning of work among young people, and to ascertain whether they possess the socially approved attitudes towards work, such as success-seeking, team spirit, and preparedness. It also aims to identify their work attitudes in order to anticipate their employability in the near

future. Literature and statistics indicate that the high proportion of youths among the unemployed in Malaysia is owing to the relatively high retrenchment rate of young workers due to their lack of seniority (Abdul Rahim et al., 2006). However, little is known about the attitudes of young people toward their future work situation.

2. Conceptual Framework

Review of the literature concentrates on the following relevant concepts, as discussed below.

2.1 Adolescence, young people and employability status

Adolescence is defined as the period between childhood and adulthood when personal growth takes place (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Erik Erikson (1985) defines the process of adolescence as a period in which young people struggle with the questions of who they are as well as who they will become. These questions lead to the life situations they eventually may face in their future. In most cases, their life situations depend on their work and career.

Adolescents normally undergo school-to-work transition process. The transition from school to work is a stage of one's experiences in life as one navigates one's way through the social structures that one confronts, from the schooling phase to the working phase. The period of transition varies according to factors such as age, gender, education attainment and economic situation. In countries where education is emphasised, a youth may enter the workforce at a later age, at least after the completion of his or her secondary education. To begin working early may have its own set of strengths and weaknesses (Grubb, 1999).

In Malaysia, Chew Siew Ghee (2005) highlights the often difficult and painful process of decision-making among young people in their shift from school to work. It was recorded elsewhere that youths are almost three times as likely to be unemployed compared to adults, and young women are more likely to be unemployed than young men (International Labour Organisation, 2001a). This indicates that youths face specific and substantial difficulties in the labour market. In discussing the case of Malaysia, data also indicate that youths aged 15 to 24 years formed the highest proportion of the unemployed between 1998 and 2008 for both sexes. The pattern is almost similar to the world unemployment rate among youths.

Employability may refer to the employment rates of youths from an institution and the characteristics of an individual youth. With reference to the work of Shukran et al. (2004), employability in here is about the potential or attributes of the individual to obtain fulfilling work, or their capability of being employed in a job. Employability refers to the development of a range of personal attributes and achievements that make it more likely for youths to obtain a job and do well at work.

Developing young people's employability is the key policy issue for ensuring their successful transition to the labour market and their access to career-oriented employment (Jennings et al., 2006; Montross et al., 2004). The changing phenomenon of the labour market requires youths to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow them to find work and cope with unpredictable labour market changes. In essence, youths require a particular attitude in order to be employable.

2.2 Good Work Attitudes and Youth Employment

Youth's good work attitude refers to how young people 'feel' and believe in their work, as well as their approach towards it. In short, it is about positive attitudes in relation to work. It is different from work behaviour attitudes. Behaviour refers to how they 'do' the work in practice; it relates to how they do their work and how they get their work done. The differentiation between the two concepts must be unambiguous in this

research. This research adopts the earlier concept. Since the youths are not yet employed, their feelings toward work are being investigated here. The way youths feel depends largely on their social interactions and other external influences. The lack of good work attitudes required by the labour market has made young people less employable (Fatimah, 2007).

The problem can be partly attributed to the fact that the education and training system often offer curricula that are irrelevant or unrelated to the needs of the labour market and for a productive working life. Young people therefore tend to experience longer periods of job-seeking as compared to adults. A number of them, especially young women, may become discouraged and give up actively looking for work. Part of the problem lies in the fact that the aspirations of young people are unrelated to the realities of the labour market.

This is further aggravated by the lack of proper career guidance and counselling in the educational institutions (Rusch, 2008). Literature in Malaysia have found that many school leavers in Malaysia enter the labour market unprepared (Abdul Rahim et al., 2006) and possess negative behaviours (Rabiatul Nalawiyah & Intan Suraya, 2007; Siti Hawa, 2006) such as involvement in crime and violence; displaying rebellious attitude; substance abuse; and political extremism. Moreover, their expectations differ from the realities of the labour market (Chew et al. 1995). As a result, they experience longer spells of unemployment when looking for their first job.

The lack of productive and quality work opportunities presents a serious cost not only to the young people themselves, but to their families, societies and the economy as well. The cost of lost production and wasted human potential to economic and social development is extremely high (Baskaran, 2009). As a successful developing country that aims to become a high-income nation, Malaysia must ensure that it receives the commitment that it needs from the youth to develop the country.

3. Theoretical Framework

There is no doubt that the socio-cultural environment of a society affects the values and attitudes of its members. Viewing society as a system of interrelatedness lies at the core of most social theories. The way a person perceives her/his surroundings shapes her/his reaction towards them. Deriving from this assumption, the study is guided by the following theories.

3.1 Theory of Cultural Values (TCV)

According to the TCV, the meaning of work in the life of a person is influenced by prevailing cultural value priorities. Since cultural values represent the implicit and explicit shared abstract concepts about what is good, right and desirable in a societies, they become the bases for the specific norms for the members. The original TCV proposed by Schwartz (1999) found that Malaysia is reflected by a hierarchy-conservatism value type. This value embeds the hierarchical ascribed social roles with obligations and compliance to the system, which legalises an unequal distribution of power, roles and resources. It further enhances by conservatism outlook that promotes social/traditional order, politeness, obedient and devout, which restrains inclinations that may disrupt group solidarity and traditional order. Based on this cultural value centrality, the study expects Malaysian youths to display a certain level of homogeneity in their work attitude. They value aspects such as social power and wealth. Thus, in work, their interests lay in gaining significant material benefits, as these are highly regarded by society as a measure of one's success.

3.2 Youth Empowerment Theory (YET)

In its initial construction, YET primarily supports youths' healthy development and their integration into the community through empowerment. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional concept that consists of practical

application, social action processes, as well as individual and collective outcomes (Small & Memmo, 2004). Because today's youths are more open to the risk of unhealthy social behaviours, this theory suggests that the larger community must encourage youths to have good attitudes toward work.

The initiation of life chances; positive association between youth and adults; and a safe, supportive environment are among the crucial elements highlighted by this theory. Rather than relying on the individual effort, this theory sees the strength of the collective effort in bringing about beneficial youth development and empowerment. For this study, however, the concept of empowerment will only be addressed at a theoretical level with specific reference to youths and their social surroundings. At a practical level, Jennings et al. (2006) suggests how those social interactions can be used to empower young people to enhance productivity. According to YET, the process of youth empowerment must be assisted by the community, which includes adults who play a significant role in the youths' life, such as those in the family, school as well as employers. This study will later apply the practicality of YET by recommending relevant programmes for youths at work.

4. Research Site and Sampling Procedures

In order to understand the work attitudes of young people towards their future work situation, this study applies both quantitative as well as qualitative approaches. The latter serves to support the evidences (or lack of evidence) from the former. This is due to the fact that quantitative approach alone may be unable to capture the issue thoroughly, and thus interviews are best used to buttress the discussion well (Neuman, 2006: Punch, 2005). At the same time, there are endless debates on the validity and reliability aspects of qualitative approach. For those reasons mentioned, this study has applied both approaches. The sampling frame of this study was trainees recruited for the National Service Training Programme, or Program Latihan Khidmat Negara (PLKN).

There are two fundamental reasons behind the selection of the PLKN trainees. Firstly, these youth were exposed to a character-building module that emphasises good values and self-confidence, leadership and self-evaluation; all of which are several important work attitude components. Secondly, this research took advantage of the fact that these youths are extracted annually from the population of 17-year-old Malaysians nationwide. They are randomly selected by a computer system that chooses each youth.

Due to data randomness, the youths selected can be generalised and their views towards work, as well as how they feel about it, are representative of 17-year-old Malaysians. They were expected to have fundamental skills and undergone basic training through schools, and to have some ideas and expectations towards their future careers. This transitional process is believed to have further strengthened their good values, self-confidence, leadership and self-evaluation.

The study began with the pilot study, which served as the groundwork project with the purpose of testing the design of the questionnaire and interview guide. Out of 362 trainees, 50 were selected (or 13.8 percent) that comprises different platoons with specifications of gender and ethnic group. Based on the result of Cronbach's alpha test, the pilot study made adjustments for errors prior to the actual fieldwork (Spatz & Kardas, 2007). The actual fieldwork applied the stratified sampling technique using the same sampling. In the end, the study managed to obtain 159 respondents for the quantitative survey and ten (10) interviewees for the qualitative semi structured approach.

5. Methods and Methodologies

All quantitative data was keyed into SPSS, version 18.0, while the qualitative data was manually transcribed, and later coded.

5.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire applied the 9-work attitude construct. The constructs include the success-driven; assertiveness; self-confidence; elements of work; reliability and integrity; stress management; flexibility; team player; and preparedness towards work. Most questionnaire items of the construct are replicated from attitudes towards work questionnaires developed by Alfano (1972) and Dunham (1988). All items were in English with Bahasa translation. A Likert scale seemed to offer an acceptable method of measuring attitudes (Maurer et. al., 1998; Likert, 1932). The items were closed-ended questions with a 4-point Likert response scale (1=strongly agree”; 2=agree; 3=disagree; and 4=strongly disagree), with higher scores indicating a higher level of agreement. The respondent’s agreement level was tested based on statements related to particular work attitudes. The reliability coefficient results obtained acceptable alpha coefficient values ranging from $\alpha=.710$ to $\alpha=.819$ in all the work attitudes. To check the differences in the underlying factor structure, the factor analysis was used to identify the relationship of the entire 9-work attitude construct.

Apart from measuring the strength of linear association between the variables and testing the values of the control variable (age) and dependent variable (statements about work attitudes), the analysis strategy also looked for abnormal findings. This study expects that most respondents will represent youths who conform to the expectations of society. However, abnormal cases will reduce the social generalizations about young people and their attitudes toward work. The present study found almost similar stereotypical work attitudes among the respondents, with the exception of several items from the questionnaire construct. Further clarification will be discussed later.

An assessment of the normality of data is a pre-requisite for many statistical tests as normal data is an underlying assumption in parametric setting (Jürgen, 2004). In satisfying the above statistical pre-requisite, this study ran the normality test and the normal Q-Q plots on the work attitude statements. Since the size of the sample is small, the study applied the Shapiro-Wilk test to measure data normality. Its result displayed a statistical significance of above 0.07, thus indicating that the data was normal. House et al. (2007) indicates that job satisfaction, managerial motivation, occupational choice, the importance of pay and pay effectiveness, managerial motivation, and coalition formation in organization are relevant predictors of work attitudes. As such, the 9-work attitude construct applied in this study uses almost identical predictors. The constructs include success-driven; assertiveness; self-confidence; elements of work; reliability and integrity; stress management; flexibility; team player and preparedness towards work.

Due to the theoretically based derivation of the characteristic values, a content validity can be assumed that individual values are significantly different between successful and less successful attitudes of the workers (Neuman, 2006).

5.2 Interview

As planned, the qualitative information may support the evidences (or lack of evidence) from the quantitative data. The qualitative data was based on two focal interview guides, which are “what is job to you?” and “what are the work attitudes needed by young people?” These questions were extremely useful in anticipating the attitudes of youths toward work in their future. The first interview-guide was the extension to the open-ended question in the questionnaire. It further explores the meaning of job among young interviewees. How they interpret and give meanings to job will be interesting because it may represent a particular youth work attitudinal value.

In addition, the second interview-guide has its unique significance. This “emic” account describes the conscious or unconscious meaningful illumination about the expected work attitudes qualities by young people themselves. The interviews were transcribed, translated and later analyzed.

In examining the transcription among my interviewees, I analyzed the contexts of the conversations to derive an understanding of how they structured the meaning and context of work. These contexts were then analyzed based on the coding system. The coding system is divided into three coding systems. Firstly, in the open coding system, I examined the themes and assigned initial codes to condense the data in categories. Secondly, using the axial coding system, I organised, linked, and discovered key analytic categories based on the pre-determined codes. Finally, in the selective coding system, I selectively looked for cases that illustrated certain themes. I then compared and contrasted the cases, especially those with themes/categories that clustered together.

6. Findings and Discussions

Below are the findings based on both qualitative and quantitative methods, and further discussions of the research.

6.1 Quantitative Data

Data analyzes using nominal, interval and ratio data are generally straightforward and transparent. However, the same cannot be said for analyzes of ordinal data, particularly those involving Likert scales in survey. Ordinal data has been the subject of debate among many statisticians and psychometric experts. The adequacy of treating ordinal data as interval data continues to be a controversial topic in survey analyzes in a variety of applied fields (Jakobsson, 2004; Jamieson, 2004). Following the suggestion made by Vigderhous (1977), the study treated the Likert scale used in the questionnaire items as interval data, and consequently applied Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient test. It measured the strength of a linear association between age and work attitude statements. The value of the association was then indicated in percentages.

The Likert scale statements were predetermined based on socially approved work attitudes such as “I enjoy getting things done”; “I very much like trying out new ways of doing things” among others. The strategy of the study is therefore to focus on the deviant cases that are worth further investigation.

In order to test the stated hypothesis, the study correlated age with those identified abnormal cases that existed from the 9-work attitude constructs. Section-1 on “drive to success”, 64.3 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement “I will choose work that gives less workload as my career”. When age was correlated with the particular statement, it was found these variables were significantly associated at Pearson’s $r=.547$ at $p=.001$. Such findings are important in understanding youths’ attitude towards certain types of job for their career. Their reluctance to accept heavy workload reveals a positive relationship between age and work choosiness. This finding sheds some light on the job continuity situation among young people. Even at the age of 17, with no obvious skills and experience in work, it appears that these youths had already set their minds towards having less workload in their careers.

However, most of the current job markets require workers with multiple, rather than single, specific skills (Rugaber, 2010). Thus, their selectiveness and preference for jobs with less workload would not only reduce their employability, but may also increase their chances of remaining unemployed in the long term. Section-2 on “assertiveness” revealed one striking finding in relation to youths’ socially-disapproved attitudes toward work. Assertiveness is a form of communication in which needs or wishes are stated clearly in relation to

oneself and the other person in the interaction (Back & Back, 2001). Approximately 63.5 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement “I will choose to work at sector that requires less competition”.

When age was correlated with the statement, it showed a significant association at Pearson's $r=.609$ at $p=.001$. Additionally, 70.4 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement “I think I prefer working in areas or fields that are less stressful”. When age was correlated with the statement, it also showed a significant association at Pearson's $r=.648$ at $p=.001$. Both findings reveal a contrast in the responses; on the one hand, the youths who participated in the study often indicated through their responses that they were forceful and foreword, yet, on the other hand, they were less assertive in their actions.

The challenges and barriers youths have to face in obtaining a job and retaining their position are increasing in the technological age. One of the factors behind this situation is that more fresh graduates join the job market every year (Hamisah Hamid, 2008). However, many youths have been found to be less competitive over future job opportunities due to the fact that they have less working experience (Podesta, 2009). In Section-3 on “self-confidence”, more than 57.1 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement “I think my views are not significant to the organisation therefore I do not care of creating one”. When a correlation test was run on the statement with age, the study found a significant association with Pearson's $r=.407$ at the probability value of $p=.005$.

Similar to the earlier findings on assertiveness, the results suggest that young people require motivation and practical training to augment their level of self-confidence. Higher self-confidence could lead to heightened productivity on the youths' part, which will consequently increase their employability appeal to the prospective employers. A lack of self-confidence has several shortcomings. In general, it can be detrimental to a youth's overall performance in the workplace since the majority of work-related roles require the ability to communicate with others on a regular basis in order to convey information or to work as part of a collective team (Maguire, 2010). Regaining confidence and personal control, therefore, requires support from others, successful personal experiences, as well as involvement in meaningful community activities (Borgen & Hiebert, 2006).

Psychologists believe that parents and educational institutions play a major role in building youths' self-confidence (Chong Liong Kam, 2010). Section-4 analyzes “elements of work” where it found 85.5 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement “In any jobs, receiving the highest income is important for me”. When age was correlated with the particular statement, it was found they were significantly associated with Pearson's $r=.449$ at the probability value of $p=.005$. Young people at an early stage should be less choosy and demanding about high salaries or other special benefits, especially if they are fresh workers without any considerable working experiences. This illustrates the vulnerability of the Malaysian youths. Their choosiness when selecting a career is the reason why the rate of unemployment remains high. Considering the current economic situations, youths should be less demanding and should start from the bottom (Marohaini Yusoff, 2010). In a 2005 survey, Indonesian jobseekers stated that ‘no work experience’ was the main obstacle in finding a decent job. This view was shared by employers as well whom agreed that work experience is one of the primary characteristics they look for in hiring a candidate (International Labour Office, 2001b: 2005).

Section-5 on “reliability and integrity” on the statement “When I made decision, I will not revoke it” indicates an uncompromising attitude at work. About 55.3 percent of the respondents agreed with that statement (Pearson's $r=.494$, $p=.005$). In analyzing the finding, the study understands that these young people have a

tendency to be very static or rigid in their working lives. Compromising is very much needed in the work environment (Nunes, 2010; Sarfaty et al., 2007; Taylor, 2009).

Section-6 on “stress management at work” revealed 93.6 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement “I get annoyed when there is chaos around me” (Pearson’s $r=.439$, $p=.005$). Another related agreement is found in the statement “I would not feel hesitate to quit from a job if it gives me too much pressure” (with 66.7 percent agreement level at Pearson’s $r=.472$, $p=.005$). These findings show that when the stress management issue is critically analyzed, these young people are apparently unable to manage their stressful emotions well. Certain tasks are undoubtedly very burdensome. If the youths remain motivated in carrying out their work, they can avert any stressful emotions. In addition to that, they must stay focused when completing their tasks, as it is a sign that they are happy with what they are doing. A stay-focused, happy and less stressful employee can progress in her/his career (Demori, 2011).

Section-7 on “flexibility at work” found that 81.0 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement “I dislike doing the same things” (Pearson’s $r=.510$, $p=.005$). This is not a good work attitude, as repetitive work is often considered as practice for fresh workers to polish their working skills. When handling recurring problems and issues, however, employees need to work out on new ways to come up with a solution rather than stick to the same method, as the latter signifies poor problem-solving skills (O’Neil et.al, 1997).

Section-8 on “team player at work” revealed an indeterminate inclination of the respondents, who represent the youths in Malaysia, to disagree on the statement “I will respect my colleagues’ opinions and ideas even if mine is better” with 96.2 percent (Pearson’s $r=.509$, $p=.005$). Various economic and management literatures have indicated that productivity improves with teamwork, and that the presence of heterogeneous members in the team in particular produces more productive profits to the company (Goleman, 2006; Hamilton et al., 2003). Coincidentally, 95.6 percent of them also agreed with the statement “I am aware of my status as worker therefore I think I will never complain” as found in Section-9 on “preparedness to work”, with Pearson’s $r=.402$, $p=.005$. The need to be a person who is not afraid to voice out her or his opinions while working enables the sharing of different ideas and perspectives that would in return benefit the company (Lai, 2010; Lindenberg & Stoltz-Loike, 2009).

To recapitulate the research findings, this article highlights these youths were expected to have certain work attitudes which could help them to be employable. Evidently, even though Malaysian youths usually shared acceptable societal expectations towards work, there were also several cases which indicate otherwise. The study unearthed a number of nonstandard responses that may be connected to the employability and/or unemployable issues among youths in Malaysia. It was found that the majority of them did not possess the socially approved attitudes toward work such as lack of success-driven, assertiveness, self-confidence, integrity, self management, flexibility, teamwork and work preparedness work values. These attitudes play a significant role in creating a promising employability situation for the youths. Since they do not have such work values, the study foresees that they may have a difficult employability situation ahead.

6.2 Qualitative Data

The quantitative results were further strengthened by the findings of the qualitative approach. The interview focuses on two principal questions, which are “what is job to you” and “what are the work attitudes needed by young people”. The first question serves to provide the context of how young people define work; while the second question operates to elaborate further on their work attitudes. Following the same principle with the quantitative approach of searching the deviant case, the study managed to unearth several

codes which were incongruent with people's expectations. It was found that a few of the interviewees ingenuously professed that work meant money. Quotations such as "completing work to get money"; "money, money, money"; an action that can earn material comfort"; "gaining income to live" were common codes indicated by the interviewees.

Interestingly, the money attraction issue from the qualitative approach is in sequence with Section-4 on "elements of work" in the quantitative approach. It showed that 85.5 percent of the respondents agreed that receiving high income was important for them. Ideally, individuals at a young age are not expected to be fussy about earning high wages or receiving other material perks, especially if they are brand new employees without any prior substantial working experiences. Although most interviewees provided the definition of work that is generally acceptable to society, the fact that a few of them opined that work means money or material comfort to them is quite distressing and requires further clarification.

The interviewees associated having money with being independent in life. For example, Alia said, "A job to me means I can hold on to my money and thus be independent. I don't need to rely on other people". She related that being financially independent and having money lead to material comfort. The fact that the interviewees placed the meaning of work in the direction of materialistic value can be viewed in both a positive and negative light. It cannot be denied that people perform their jobs to earn money for a living. On the other hand, placing too much emphasis on making money while having no concern over other aspects of life can create webs of problems for the country. Instead of developing the country in a well-balanced manner, it may just damage its spiritual and moral aspects of life.

Many literatures conclude that work does not only signify money. On the contrary, the search for self-satisfaction, continuation of one's life stage and the search for spiritual comfort are among the meanings of work found elsewhere (Noraini, 2001; Rohaiza, 2009). As far as the study is concerned, the results from the qualitative approach complement the findings of the quantitative approach. Although most young people in this study share the social conventional meaning of work, they also possessed a number of socially disapproved attitudes towards work.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The school-to-work transitional period is a shift of time from a point of theoretical knowledge uploading context to a point of practical knowledge application context that can be challenging to a number of young people. For the purpose of this study, the respondents involved were adolescents of 17 years of age, who had mostly completed their secondary school. They represent a group of young people in Malaysia who, while currently not active in the workforce, have attitudes towards work that determine whether they possess the socially approved work attitudes such as success-seeking, team spirit, preparedness, among others – all of which may be used to predict their employability situation in future.

It is apparent that the meaning of work in a person's life is influenced by prevailing cultural value priorities, as suggested by the Theory of Cultural Values (TCV). The TCV's hierarchy conservatism value type is the basis for the specific norms for the society's members. It was found that the Malaysian youths' work attitude revealed a homogenous nature which paid close attention to the ascribed social roles with obedience and compliance to the system. Material achievement and potentialities turned out to be the indicators of success.

In applying the Youth Empowerment Theory (YET) to the discussion, apparently blaming youths for the whole predicament is not entirely correct. After all, they are the products of a system. The majority of them are

oblivious to the expectations of the employment market towards them. This gap needs to be bridged immediately. The system, particularly the education system, must bring in a more practical curriculum that enables them to be more creative and enterprising towards work.

Young people need to be brought closer to the experiences of the employment world. To facilitate this, collective efforts to welcome corporate social responsibility among work organisations are clearly needed. With the assistance of various bodies and a positive environment, it is possible for the right work attitude of the youths to be shaped and empowered at an early age. Young workers represent the workforce of the future. Entering the workforce requires young people to adapt to new social realities. For many, the prospects of choosing a career path marks a major turning point in their personal development and can cause frustration and anxiety. Particular emphasis should be given to the role of youths' work experiences in shaping their future work-related attitudes.

This study brings attention to the experiences of young people regardless of sexes, as they navigate their way through the social structures that confront them throughout this transitional period. It highlights youths' attitudes towards work. Instead of possessing good work attitudes, they do not have the drive to achieve success; lack assertiveness; do not have self-confidence; lack integrity; are short of self management; inflexible; do not possess team work; and lack preparedness toward work.

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